

CLAIMS

1 1. A method of determining the status of an answered telephone during the course of
2 an outbound telephone call comprising:

3 A. placing, with an automated calling system, a telephone call to a location having a
4 telephone number at which a target person is listed;

5 B. upon said telephone call being answered, initiating a prerecorded greeting which
6 asks for the target person;

7 C. receiving a spoken response from an answering person;

8 D. performing a speech recognition analysis on said spoken response to determine a
9 status of said spoken response; and

10 E. if said speech recognition analysis determines that said answering person is said
11 target person, initiating a speech recognition application with said target person.

12 2. The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis
1 determines that said spoken response indicates that said answering person is not said target
2 person, a next step comprises initiating a prerecorded query asking for said target person.
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4 3. The method of claim 2 wherein, upon said target person answering said telephone
5 call, said method further comprises initiating a speech recognition application with said target
6 person.
7

8 4. The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis
9 determines that said spoken response indicates that said target person is not present at said
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11

3 location, a next step comprises initiating a prerecorded query asking to leave a message for said
4 target person.

1 5. The method of claim 4 further comprising a step of providing a prerecorded
2 message to said answering person.

1 6. The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis
2 determines that said spoken response is a hold request, a next step comprises entering a wait state
3 to wait for said target person to provide a spoken response to said telephone call.

1 7. The method of claim 6 wherein, upon said target person providing a spoken
2 response to said telephone call, said method further comprises initiating a speech recognition
3 application with said target person.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis
2 determines that said spoken response is a request for the identity of the entity responsible for the
3 calling system, the method further comprises initiating a prerecorded response indicating the
4 identity of the calling party, repeating said prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person,
5 and repeating step C through step E.

1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis
2 determines that said spoken response indicates that said telephone number is not the correct
3 number for the target person, the method further comprises initiating a prerecorded apology
4 message and terminating said telephone call.

1 10. The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis
2 cannot determine a status of said spoken response, said method further comprises repeating said
3 prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person, and repeating step C through step E.

1 11. A system for determining the status of an answered telephone during the course of
2 an outbound telephone call comprising:

3 an automated telephone calling device for placing a telephone call to a location having a
4 telephone number at which a target person is listed; and

5 a speech recognition device which, upon said telephone call being answered, initiates a
6 prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person, receives a spoken response from an
7 answering person and performs a speech recognition analysis on said spoken response to
8 determine a status of said spoken response;

9 wherein, if said speech recognition device determines that said answering person is said
10 target person, said speech recognition device initiates a speech recognition application with said
11 target person.

1 12. The system of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device determines that
2 said spoken response indicates that said answering person is not said target person, said speech
3 recognition system instructs said automated telephone calling device to initiate a prerecorded
4 query asking for said target person.

1 13. The system of claim 12 wherein, upon said target person answering said
2 telephone call, said speech recognition system initiates a speech recognition application with said
3 target person.

1 14. The system of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device determines
2 that said spoken response indicates that said target person is not present at said location, said
3 speech recognition system instructs said automated telephone calling device to initiate a
4 prerecorded query asking to leave a message for said target person.

1 15. The system of claim 14 wherein said automated telephone calling device provides
2 a prerecorded message to said answering person.

1 16. The system of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device determines that
2 said spoken response is a hold request, said speech recognition enters a wait state to wait for said
3 target person to provide a spoken response to said telephone call.

1 17. The system of claim 16 wherein, when said speech recognition device determines
2 that said target person has provided a spoken response to said telephone call, said speech
3 recognition device initiates a speech recognition application with said target person.

1 18. The system of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device determines that
2 said spoken response is a request for the identity of the entity responsible for the automated
3 calling device, the speech recognition system instructs said automated telephone calling device
4 to initiate a prerecorded response indicating the identity of the entity and to repeat said
5 prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person;

6 wherein, upon receiving a spoken response from the answering person, said speech
7 recognition device performs a speech recognition analysis on said spoken response to determine
8 the status of said spoken response.

1 19. The method of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device determines
2 that said spoken response indicates that said telephone number is not the correct number for the
3 target person, said speech recognition system instructs said automated telephone calling device
4 to initiate a prerecorded apology message and to terminate said telephone call.

1 20. The method of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device cannot
2 determine a status of said spoken response, said speech recognition system instructs said
3 automated telephone calling device to repeat said prerecorded greeting which asks for the target
4 person;

5 wherein, upon receiving a spoken response from the answering person, said speech
6 recognition device performs a speech recognition analysis on said spoken response to determine
7 the status of said spoken response.

1 21. A method for determining the status of an answered telephone during the course
2 of an outbound telephone call comprising:

3 A. placing, with an automated calling system, a telephone call to a location having a
4 telephone number at which a target person is listed;

5 B. upon said telephone call being answered, initiating a prerecorded greeting which
6 asks for the target person;

7 C. receiving a spoken response from an answering person;

8 D. performing a speech recognition analysis on said spoken response to determine a
9 status of said spoken response; and

10 E. providing at least one of the following responses based on said speech recognition
11 analysis:

12 a. if said speech recognition analysis determines that said answering person is
13 said target person, initiating a speech recognition application with said target person;

14 b. if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response
15 indicates that said answering person is not said target person, initiating a prerecorded query
16 asking for said target person, wherein, upon said target person answering said telephone call,
17 said method further comprises initiating a speech recognition application with said target person;

18 c. if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response
19 indicates that said target person is not present at said location, initiating a prerecorded query
20 asking to leave a message for said target person;

21 d. if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response is a
22 hold request, entering a wait state to wait for said target person to provide a spoken response to
23 said telephone call, wherein, upon said target person providing a spoken response to said
24 telephone call, said method further comprises initiating a speech recognition application with
25 said target person;

26 e. if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response is a
27 request for the identity of the entity responsible for the calling system, initiating a prerecorded
28 response indicating the identity of the calling party, repeating said prerecorded greeting which
29 asks for the target person, and repeating step C through step E;

30 f. if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response
31 indicates that said telephone number is not the correct number for the target person, initiating a
32 prerecorded apology message and terminating said telephone call; and

33 g. if said speech recognition analysis cannot determine a status of said spoken
34 response, repeating said prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person, and repeating step
35 C through step E.

1 22. A method of detecting an answering machine comprising:

2 A. placing, with an automated calling system, a telephone call to a location having a
3 telephone number at which a target person is listed;

4 B. upon said telephone call being answered, waiting for a predetermined time period
5 for a spoken response;

6 C. upon receiving said spoken response, playing a prerecorded greeting prompt
7 which asks for said target person;

8 D. while playing said prerecorded greeting prompt, attempting to detect a further
9 spoken response in excess of a predetermined time parameter;

10 E. in the absence of detecting said further spoken response during the playing of said
11 prerecorded greeting prompt, initiating a query application;

12 F. upon detecting said further spoken response during the playing of said
13 prerecorded greeting prompt, terminating the playing of said prerecorded prompt; and

14 G. indicating that an answering machine has been detected.

1 23. The method of claim 22 further comprising the step of attempting to detect a beep
2 tone during the playing of said prerecorded greeting prompt and, upon the detection of a beep
3 tone, interrupting the prerecorded greeting prompt and playing a prerecorded answering machine
4 message prompt.

